



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2019 - The Thirty First Sunday in Ordinary Time

**1** Relax & Remember

Set aside 10 -15 minutes and create a suitable environment by removing any distractions. Make sure that you are comfortable. Perhaps light a candle. Make the sign of the cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. **Call to mind the love that God has for you. Remember that through this scripture our Lord is truly present.** Then read the Gospel, preferably aloud and slowly, and pay attention to any words that stand out. If any do, meditate on them for a few minutes and be invited into a dialogue with God.



**2** Read

**Taken from the Gospel for 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2019 (Luke 19:1-10): Zacchaeus**

Jesus entered Jericho and was going through the town when a man whose name was Zacchaeus made his appearance; he was one of the senior tax collectors and a wealthy man. He was anxious to see what kind of man Jesus was, but he was too short and could not see him for the crowd; so he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to catch a glimpse of Jesus who was to pass that way. When Jesus reached the spot he looked up and spoke to him: "Zacchaeus, come down. Hurry, because I must stay at your house today." And he hurried down and welcomed him joyfully. They all complained when they saw what was happening. "He has gone to stay at a sinner's house," they said. But Zacchaeus stood his ground and said to the Lord, "Look, sir, I am going to give half my property to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody I will pay him back four times the amount." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man too is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek out and save what was lost."



**3** Reflect

**After spending a few minutes considering this Gospel, continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection.**

*The story of the rich little tax-collector of Jericho is always a favourite. It was a constant complaint of defenders of the Law and its prescriptions that Jesus kept disreputable company – tax-collectors, lepers, Samaritans and prostitutes! He took part in their carousals and seemed to enjoy their company. Tax-collectors are never popular, and everyone thinks they are over-taxed. Under Roman rule the tax-farmers were moral outcasts, especially because they worked for the hated foreign dominators, and surely many added their own percentage to the tax demanded; Jesus does not seem even to mind that they were considered unclean. He does not wait for them to repent and approach him, but positively goes out to them and summons them into his company. Zacchaeus had given no sign of good intentions. This unpopular little man was simply inquisitive, wanting to see what Jesus looked like, not even trying to get near him. One can imagine his open-mouthed and delighted amazement, perched in his sycamore-tree, as Jesus invited himself to supper over the heads of the intervening crowd. 'Why should Jesus choose me?' he might be thinking. No conditions are attached; he provides no immediate guarantee of good behaviour or repentance! Yet he is changed fundamentally and responds with generosity. So Jesus draws out our good intentions before we are even really aware of them ourselves.*

**Jesus invites each of us to welcome him: how do we best respond?**

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

**4** Respond & Request

Now slowly and prayerfully read the Gospel once again but this time in silence. Consider how this Gospel could apply to your life in general. Then thank God for any insight you may have received. Conclude by asking God to bless you with one of the following spiritual gifts to help you act on any resolution you have made: love, understanding, wisdom, faithfulness, peace, self control, patience, or joy. Please remember to pray for the Church and particularly our school families. **Then conclude by requesting the prayers of Our Lady & St Joseph.**



# WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS †

Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2019



## First Reading: *God's Love for All*

### Wisdom 11:22 - 12:2

In your sight, Lord, the whole world is like a grain of dust that tips the scales, like a drop of morning dew falling on the ground. Yet you are merciful to all, because you can do all things and overlook men's sins so that they can repent. Yes, you love all that exists; you hold nothing of what you have made in abhorrence, for had you hated anything, you would not have formed it. And how, had you not willed it, could a thing persist, how be conserved if not called forth by you? You spare all things because all things are yours, Lord, lover of life, you whose imperishable spirit is in all. Little by little, therefore, you correct those who offend, you admonish and remind them of how they have sinned, so that they may abstain from evil and trust in you, Lord.

*On the occasion of the conversion of Zacchaeus which we read about in today's gospel, the Church presents us also with this reading from the Book of Wisdom; it is one of the strongest statements in the Old Testament of God's mercy on all and God's desire that all people should be saved, "for had you hated anything, you would not have formed it". Again and again the Book of Wisdom makes much of God's forbearance, so that sinners may have every chance to repent. This presents us with a clash: our love for God must be free, so that it is possible not to choose God. If our choice of God must be free, rejection of God must also be a possibility. And yet, would God have created anyone who did not choose God? We do not know that anyone actually has rejected God. Hell must be a possibility, but is it empty? We have no right to judge the consciences even of the monsters of history, and it is hard to say that anyone has been without some spark of generosity or gentleness or goodness.*

***How is the concept of Hell compatible with a loving and forgiving God?***

## Second Reading: *The Final Coming of the Lord*

### 2 Thessalonians 1:11 - 2:2

We pray continually that our God will make you worthy of his call, and by his power fulfil all your desires for goodness and complete all that you have been doing through faith; because in this way the name of our Lord Jesus Christ will be glorified in you and you in him, by the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. To turn now, brothers, to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and how we shall all be gathered round him: please do not get excited too soon or alarmed by any prediction or rumour or any letter claiming to come from us, implying that the Day of the Lord has already arrived.

“The Lord's death and resurrection has changed everything.”

*The earliest Christians were confused about the final coming of the Lord. Jesus proclaimed that the Kingship of God was imminent. Did this mean that the world was coming rapidly to an end? How rapidly? Was the gist of his teaching principally that his death and resurrection changed everything, even the whole constitution of the world? Then Paul taught that this world was passing away, that Christ would soon come in a great triumphal procession. Some saw the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD as an urgent sign of the end. The Book of Revelation seems to teach that there will be a reign of Christ for a thousand years after the first resurrection and before the final struggle with Satan and then the second resurrection; today's reading suggests that some thought the Day of the Lord had already arrived. Each year, as the cycle of readings draws to an end, the Church reminds us of this final coming of the Lord. When will it be? All we know is that it is imminent, in the sense that we must live in the spirit that God's final reckoning is urgently impending, and 'it is not for you to know the times and dates that the Father has decided' (Acts 1:7).*

***How much do I need to know about the future and the end of all things?***

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